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## An Error Analysis Of Pronouncing English Diphthongs

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### ARTICLEINFO

**Article history:**

Received 30 Juni 2023

Received 12 Juli 2023

Accepted 30 Agustus 2023

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**Keywords:**

*Error Analysis, English*

*Diphthongs, Pronunciation.*

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### ABSTRACT

Pronunciation plays an important role in communication. It provides the different meaning of English words when they are pronounced differently especially English diphthongs. Producing errors in pronouncing English diphthongs cause misunderstanding in communication. The research was aimed to know (1) the common mispronounced diphthongs by the second semester of English Study Program's students at intermediate speaking class and (2) the causation of errors in pronouncing English diphthongs. The mixed method research was used to get the data. The qualitative data were taken based on the observations, documentations, and interviews, meanwhile the quantitative data were taken based on the errors of the students on the tests. The results of the research were described by the percentages. The students commonly made diphthong errors as follows /uə/= 19.3%, /eə/= 21.3%, /ei/= 20%, /aʊ/= 13.10%, and /ɪə/= 26.2%. The errors happened in the classifications of substitution = 46.9%, insertion = 13.8%, and omission = 39.3%. It happened because of the influence of inter-lingual and intra-lingual factors.

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## INTRODUCTION

Communication is the most important way humans need to be connected all over the world. Communication is an action or process use words, sounds, signs, or behaviors to express or share information or to express ideas, thoughts, feelings, etc. In general, communication is done orally and can be understood by both parties to the communication. The most common component of communication is language.

Language is a means of communication in the form of sound or voice system that it produces by the human vocal organs. Every sign of language has means. Its purpose is to make communication interactive. Language is used in a civilized group. The language of each group is different. For example languages in Indonesia and English are very different, but they have the same point purposes even if they are in a different form (Susanto, et al. 2021).

Learning foreign language is not as easy as the theory read. It needs some efforts to understand all the indicators of the skill. In English, pronunciation is one of the indicators of

English skill especially in speaking and writing. The students should understand all the theories of pronunciation and practice them as many as possible in order to avoid mistakes or even errors.

The students of English study program at Madiun state polytechnic often made some errors during the intermediate speaking class. They pronounce words incorrectly especially on diphthongs. They said that they had practiced many times to pronounce them but they still made mistakes or even errors when they delivered the ideas during the class. They said that there is barrier between their understanding and mouth in practicing.

Communication is applied on the two skills of English such as speaking and writing. In speaking, communication is based on the situation and condition of the event such as one-way-communication on public speaking, two-way-communication on conversation, and three-way-communication on discussion session. Besides, communication is also implemented on writing as the spelling contributes to the meaning of words. Thus, the errors on spelling and pronouncing made misunderstanding in written and spoken communication as they changed the meaning of the words or messages. Chang and Goswami (2011: 3) state that English communication requires some indicators such as knowing the meaning, understanding the use of the structure, and being able to use the phonetic transcription to pronounce English words in communication in order to communicate correctly and fluently with others.

Pronunciation is an important part of speech. Pronunciation is one of the most important things aspects of language learning, especially in speak fluently (Sari, 2019). Pronunciation is the way to go in which a particular language, word or sound is spoken. Pronunciation used to do speakers speak more fluently and understandably. Pronunciation is a certain way a language is spoken word or sound, pronunciation is the most important thing in language learning including language skills, differences in pronunciation will affect the results of meanings, pronunciation becomes an important factor to take into account (Novarita, 2017). Mastery can be seen as like the ability to continue speaking naturally. There are a few rules word pronunciation in pronunciation, It also includes how we make words or letters using our speaking agency. We can learn more to do we say good. Pronunciation is the aspect that most affects the way a speaker talks evaluated by others and how they are formally assessed in other competencies. how sometimes people's English skills are measured by pronunciation and their mastery. We have to learn pronunciation to be fluent in English.

Pronunciation plays an important role especially on spoken language. It transfers the message of English words to the receiver of language. Mispronounced words contribute to

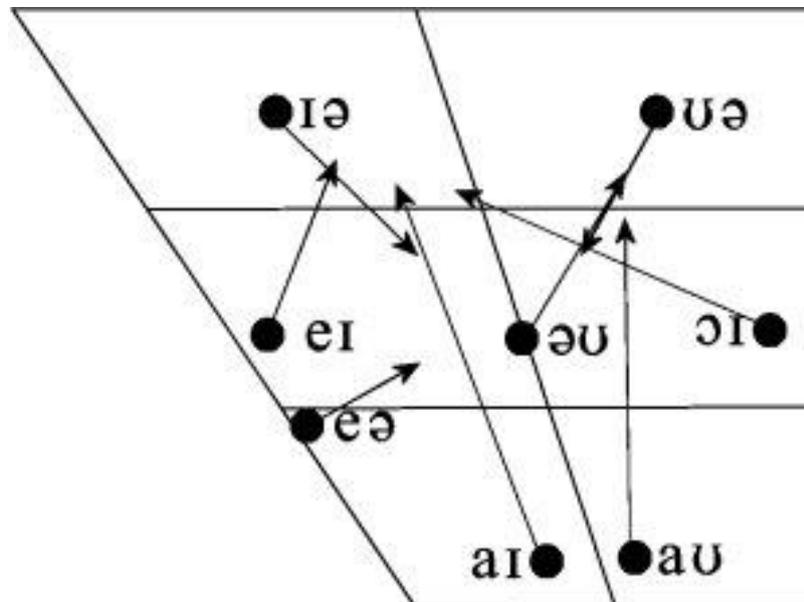
the change of meaning and message in communication. Brown (2001: 491) states that the different pronunciation or different sounds cause different meaning. Thus, English is completed with phonetical transcription of words derived from many classifications of English speech sounds such as consonants and vowels. Riyani (2013) argued that different pronunciations would cause a change in means that pronunciation without taking into account the error will interfere and cause misunderstanding of meaning. The problem occurs in mispronunciation caused by the speaker, that's why it has to be fixed. Pronunciation is important, as different pronunciations will result has a different meaning (Stefani and Roba'i, 2019).

English vowels are divided into three that is monophthongs (pure vowels), diphthongs, and triphthongs. Diphthongs are presented in various languages, one of which is English will be the subject of analysis in this study. Diphthongs is also known as gliding vowels because they will be pronounced successfully when the vowels glide fast to another vowel, which is a combination of two adjacent vowels in the same vowel rhythm. On the other hand, the characteristics of diphthongs also refer to two types of vowels that are said in one breath. Technically, a diphthong is a vowel that has two different goals: the tongue moves while pronouncing diphthongs.

There are eight English diphthongs classified into two sections. Mustikareni in Saadah (2020) explains closing and centering diphthong. Closing diphthong is the diphthong sounds that the second vowel is closer than the first vowel because the movement of the tongue is carried out from the position of open vowel to the closer vowel, while centering diphthong is the second vowel that more center than the first vowels because the movement of the tongue is carried out towards the central vowel. For example, the English closing diphthongs are (/eɪ/, /aɪ/, /ɔɪ/, /aʊ/, /əʊ/) and centering diphthong are (/ɪə/, /eə/, /ʊə/) (Roach, 1998). Here are the feature descriptions of the diphthongs (Crystal, 2003:241);

1. /eɪ/, The articulation is the glide begins from slightly below half-close front position. It moves upwards and slightly backwards towards /ɪ/. The lips are spread. The sound is as in way, cake, and pain.
2. /aɪ/, The articulation is the glide begins slightly behind front open position. It moves upwards towards /ɪ/. The lips change from neutral to loosely spread. It is obvious closing movement of lower jaw. The sound is as in eye, cry, and high.
3. /ɔɪ/, The articulation is the glide begins between back half-open and open positions, moves upwards and forwards towards /ɪ/. The lips open rounded changing to neutral. The sound is as in boy, voice, and enjoy.

4. /əʊ/, The articulation is the glide begins in central position between half-close and half open. It moves upwards and backwards towards/ʊ/. The lips are neutrally changing to slightly rounded. The sound is as in go, snow, and although.
5. /aʊ/, The articulation is the glide between back and front open positions. It moves upwards and slightly backwards towards/ʊ/. The lips change from neutrally open to slightly rounded. The jaw movement is quite extensive. The sound is as in bow, down, and house.
6. /ɪə/, The articulation is the glide begins in position for/ɪ/. It moves backwards and downwards towards/ə/. The lips are neutral, with slight movement from spread to open. The sound is as in here, fear, and idea.
7. /eə/, The articulation is the glide begins in half- open position. It moves backwards towards/ə/. The lips are neutrally open throughout. The sound is as in dare, chair, and there.
8. /ʊə/, The articulation is the glide begins in position for/ʊ/. It moves forwards and downwards towards /ə/. The lips are weakly rounded becoming neutrally spread. The sound is as in sure, tour, and obscure.



**Picture (1)** The position of English Diphthongs

## METHOD

The two methods are used in this research such as qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative method focuses on the data gained from the observation, documentation, and interview while quantitative method focuses on the students' scores. Cresswell (2012: 23) states that the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research are qualitative basically framed in term of using words and opened-end question. While quantitative is basically framed in term of using numbers and closed-end question.

The researcher used mix method to elaborate and combine those two methods in order to get the valid data. Cresswell (2012: 32) states that mixed methods research is an approach to inquiry combine two research method, qualitative and quantitative to collect data, integrate the two forms data using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks. This combination provides more complete understanding.

The qualitative data were taken from the students examinations or test. It was taken through the following steps;

1. Participants practised the spoken test.
2. Participants read aloud the test.
3. Participants' voice were recorded.
4. The recorded were listened by the researcher.
5. The recorded were transcribed into phonetic symbols from the transcription..

Meanwhile the quantitative data were taken based on the observation, documentation, and interview. The following steps were used;

1. The researcher observed the students during the class.
2. The researcher recorded the activities and the spoken test.
3. The researcher asked some questions to the students after they did the spoken test without turning off the recorder.
4. The researcher listened to the recorded.
5. The researcher transcribed the recorded to a written form.

After collecting all the data, the researcher classified the data based on the categories of diphthongs. They were analysed through the following steps;

1. The researcher analysed and categorized the students' pronunciations.
2. The researcher made the percentage of the students' pronunciations based on the diphthongs' errors.

3. The researcher searched the common errors and the causations.
4. The researcher counted the percentage of error by the use of simple formula.
5. The researcher made the conclusions and suggestions.

At last, the researcher analysed the qualitative data taken from the observations, documentations, and interviews.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Pronunciation is the important part of speaking in English. It shows the first impression of someone's language quality in communication as it plays on two sides such as speaking and listening. Pronunciation is the action or manner of pronunciation of words; statement statement. Inside in other words, we can also say that it is a way say a word, especially in an acceptable way or common understanding (Lado in Sari, 2019)

The students should correct in pronouncing words to produce understandable sentences and they should also listen correctly to avoid misunderstanding. Thus, pronunciation is obliged theoretically and practically at English study program of Madiun State Polytechnic to keep the English quality of the students.

In fact, the second semester students of English study program at Madiun State Polytechnic often made errors on their pronunciation during the class and also the test. They made errors especially to pronounce the English diphthongs such as (/eɪ/, /aɪ/, /ɔɪ/, /aʊ/, /əʊ/, /ɪə/, /eə/, /ʊə/).

Furthermore, the second semester students of English study program at Madiun State Polytechnic face the difficulty to pronounce the English diphthongs. They often made mistakes that became the errors during the class and the test. The followings are the categories and the percentages of the errors of English diphthongs; /ʊə/= 19.3%, /eə/= 21.3%, /eɪ/= 20%, /aʊ/= 13.10%, and /ɪə/= 26.2%. They also got difficulty to differentiate the pronunciation of /eɪ/, /ɪə/, and /eə/. The data of diphthong errors are as follows;

**Table (1)** Diphthong /ʊə/

No	Words	Errors	Correct Use	Occurrence
1	tour	/tʊ(r)/	/tʊə/	4 times
		/tɔʊ(r)/		3 times
		/tu:(r)/		7 times
2	poor	/pʊ(r)/	/pʊə(r)/	8 times
		/pu:(r)/		6 times

**Table (2)** Diphthong /eə/

No	Words	Errors	Correct Use	Occurrence
1	bear	/bi:(r)/ /bæ(r)/	/beə(r)/	2 times 9 times
3	There	/ðæ(r)/ /ðe:(r)/	/ðeə(r)/	13 times 7 times

**Table (3)** Diphthong /eɪ/

No	Words	Errors	Correct Use	Occurrence
1	make	/mek/ /mæk/	/meik/	7 times 3 times
2	mistake	/mistæk/ /mistek/	/misteik/	11 times 8 times

**Table (4)** Diphthong /aʊ/

No	Words	Errors	Correct Use	Occurrence
1	Restaurant	/restərənt/ /ræstərənt/	/restaʊrənt/	9 times 4 times
2	now	/nɔw/	/naʊ/	6 times

**Table (5)** Diphthong /ɪə/

No	Words	Errors	Correct Use	Occurrence
1	Rear	/rir/ /rær/	/rɪər/	11 times 7 times
2	Era	/ira/ /era/	/ɪərə/	12 times 8 times

After calculating the errors made by the the second semester students of english study program at Madiun State Polytechnic, the researcher classified them. The total common errors of diphthongs done by the students classified into five categories from 145 occurrences. Three errors of diphthongs' classifications were found such as substitution, insertion, and omission. The percentages are in the following table;

**Table (6)** The Categories of Errors

No	Kinds of Error	Occurrence	Percentage
1	Substitution	68	46,9 %
2	Insertion	20	13,8 %
3	Omission	57	39,3 %
	Total	145	100 %

Based on the data collected in this research gained from observations and interviews, the errors of pronouncing diphthongs by the second semester students of English Study

Program at Madiun State Polytechnic were caused by two factors, namely inter-lingual and intra-lingual transfer. The students generally were influenced by their mother tongue language. This influence is called inter-lingual transfer. The other students were influenced by intra-lingual transfer such as the influence of one target language item upon another and the difference spelling and voice of words.

## **CONCLUSION**

The second semester students of English Study Program at Madiun Polytechnic learned English as a foreign language as in Indonesia, the mother tongue is based on the regions and Indonesian is the second language. Thus, the students faced many difficulty in learning English pronunciation especially diphthongs. They made many errors during the test at intermediate speaking class. The students made errors to pronounce diphthongs such as; /uə/= 19.3%, /eə/= 21,3%, /ei/= 20%, /aʊ/= 13.10%, and /ɪə/= 26.2% with the occurrence 145 times. They are different percentages of error categories such as; substitution = 46.9%, insertion = 13.8%, and omission = 39.3%.

There are many factors that cause the students produce errors in pronouncing english diphthongs based on the observations and interviews. Some students said that they seldom practise their english as the language used in their daily life is not english but local language, javanese or event Indonesian. Besides, they faced difficulties to differentiate two language sound systems between indonesian and english especially diphthongs.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The researcher would like to thank to the Director of Madiun State Polytechnic, the head of research unit, the head of administration department, and the coordinator of English Study Program that has permitted and founded the research through DIPA Madiun State Polytechnic of the year 2023. The researcher also thanks to Madiun State Polytechnic for the facilities during the research.

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